Secret agent man: Has a leading light of the UFO community been briefing the CIA? (August 1994)

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Physicist Bruce Maccabee has been one of the leading lights of UFOlogy for more than a decade. Back in 1979, he helped establish the Fund for UFO Research, known for its protests over what it has said is a government cover-up of UFOs. But now Maccabee faces charges from within the UFO community he has helped to build. According to a 12-page paper issued by the so-called Associate Investigators Group, Maccabee has been holding secret meetings with the CIA.

The paper, sarcastically titled "The Fund for CIA Research?" claims that "Maccabee first approached the CIA in 1979" to discuss UFOs and has continued briefing the organization ever since. The report also states that "Maccabee's public support" for some highly controversial cases might have been encouraged by intelligence contacts who wanted to use him as a mole. According to W. Todd Zechel, an author of the paper and one of the people to get the CIA to release UFO documents back in 1979, Maccabee has shown "a lack of judgment." His relationship with the CIA represents "a conflict of interest," Zechel declares. "The public has been misled," he says.

But Maccabee insists he's done nothing wrong. "My contacts with the agency have been informal lunchtime lectures for employees. Besides, the CIA people

I've talked to tend to be skeptical about the whole thing."

According to Maccabee, his relationship with the spy group began in 1979 when he was asked to brief the CIA on some highly publicized sightings from New Zealand three months before. "I was a little leery," recalls Maccabee. "They were the bad guys; they had just released a thousand pages on UFOs after claiming for years they had no information at all. But I figured they would have technical experts who could comment on the case, and I felt nothing ventured, nothing gained."

His next contact with the CIA came in 1984 via intelligence officer Ronald Pandolfi, who was interested in Maccabee's work for the navy. But in the course of their professional relationship, Maccabee and Pandolfi also discussed UFOs. So after the Mutual UFO Network held its conference in Washington, DC, in 1987, Pandolfi asked Maccabee to present a lunchtime talk on UFOs to CIA employees. Maccabee surprised everyone by talking about UFO documents which the CIA itself had released. "The employees were apparently unfamiliar with these papers," says Maccabee, "and afterward, some people even tried to find more CIA UFO documents on their own."

Maccabee's most recent talk at the CIA took place last year, in May of 1993, two months after resigning as chairman of the Fund for UFO Research. The resignation, Maccabee adds, had nothing to do with the CIA; he'd simply moved out of town.

Maccabee's relationship with the CIA is likely to persist. "Bruce has been a friend for quite a few years," states Pandolfi. "The brown-bag luncheon

meetings are popular with the staff."

As for colleagues at the Fund for UFO Research, they have long accepted Maccabee's relationship with the CIA. "We were hungry for official information and took Bruce's word that he was in control of the situation," states Larry W. Bryant, a former member of the Fund's executive committee. "I don't think Maccabee ever jeopardized that trust."

The relationship, Maccabee contends, has yielded fruit. "These contacts managed to help me get translations of Soviet newspaper articles," he notes. But the enlightening part has been this: "I have yet to run into anybody who knows a heck of a lot more about UFOs than I do."--Patrick Huyghe

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